

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 00788 180526Z

15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 /086 W

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R 180441Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9928

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 0788

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, SEATO

SUBJECT: SEATO EXERCISE SEA FOX -FEB 27- MARCH 13, 1975

REF:STATE 9008 (NOTAL)

1. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES GENERALLY ACCURATE. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT EXCEPT FOR CONVOYING EXERCISES INTO AND OUT OF MANILA BAY, US SHIPS WILL NOT BE ENGAGED IN MANILA AREA. MINE LAYING AND ANTI-INFILTRATION EXERCISES WILL BE CONDUCTED BY PHILIPPINE NAVY PRIMARILY, FORMER IN MANILA BAY AND LATTER OFF ZAMBALES COAST IWHT PARTICIPATION BY THAIS.

2. SEATO FLEET WILL CONSIST OF 12 ASSORTED PHILIPPINE CRAFT, 13 U.S.SHIPS, 10 BRITISH AND TWO EACH FOR THAIS AND AUSTRALIANS.

3. USE OF MANILA APPARENTLY DECIDED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO WHEN SEATO WAS ADVISED THAT PREVIOUSLY AVAILABLE ON-SHORE HEADQUARTERS FACILITIES AT SUBIC NO LONGER ON HAND.

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PAGE 02 MANILA 00788 180526Z

SINCE GOP HOSTING EXERCISES, IT SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED TO

LOCATE HEADQUARTERS AND SOME EXERCISES IN MANILA UNDER CHARGE OF COMMODOR OGVINAR WHO IS DIRECTING PHILIPPINE PARTICIPATION IN EXERCISES.

4. WE ANTICIPATE THAT SEATO EXERCISES WILL RECEIVE FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL PUBLICITY PARTICULARLY SINCE PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN OPENING CEREMONY AND MANILA WILL BE EXTENDING HEARTY WELCOME AND GENEROUS HOSPITALITY TO ASSEMBLED FLEET OF 29 CRAFT. COMMODORE OGBINAR ALSO HAS PERSONAL INTEREST IN ENSURING AMPLE PUBLICITY. LIKELY PUBLICITY INTEREST AND PRESENCE OF SEATO FLEET IN MANILA WILL THEREFORE ELEVATE LOW KEY ASPECT OF PUBLICITY ARRANGEMENTS.

5. AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED SEATO EXERCISE JANUARY 17 WITH GENERAL ROMULO AND VISITING PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY LORD GORONWY-ROBERTS, BOTH OF WHOM PLEASED AS PUNCH WITH PROSPECTIVE EXERCISE AND ITS VARIOUS COMPONENTS. LORD GORONWY-ROBERTS TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT AFTER SEATO EXERCISES THE BRITISH FLEET WILL SPLIT IN TWO, ONE CONTINGENT HEADING EAST AND OTHER WEST. LATTER FLEET WILL ATTEMPT TO GET INDIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN JOINT EXERCISES IN INDIAN OCEAN.

6. COMMENT. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT PRESENT PLANS FOR SEATO EXERCISE INCLUDING APPEARANCE IN MANILA BAY, AND ATTENDANT PUBLICITY, WILL CONSTITUTE PARTICULAR PUBLICITY PROBLEM FOR US. ALTHOUGH ASSEMBLING OF FLEET IN MANILA ON DAY OF REFERENDUM (IF DAY NOT FURTHER POSTPONED) HAS ELEMENT OF BIZARRE, EXERCISE CANNOT FEASIBLY BE RE-SCHEDULED WITHOUT GREAT DIFFICULTY AND LOSS OF SOME PARTICIPANTS INCLUDING BRITISH SHIPS WHO HAVE TIMED VISIT HERE MONTHS AGO FOR PARTICIPATION. IN FACT, BRITISH PARTICIPATION IS DECIDED PUBLIC RELATIONS ADVANTAGE. MOREOVER EXTENT OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUSLY CONTEMPLATED EXERCISES IS, WE BELIEVE, ADEQUATELY CIRCUMSCRIBED TO PREVENT ANY UNDUE PROBLEM. OF COURSE WHATEVER ACTUAL LIMITATIONS THERE ARE ON U.S. PARTICIPATION, GOP PUBLICITY OVER WHICH WE HAVE NO CONTROL COULD CONCEIVABLY SUGGEST GREATER INVOLVEMENT.

7. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT WE NOT ATTEMPT TO CHANGE SEATO
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PAGE 03 MANILA 00788 180526Z

EXERCISE PLANS, BUT ENSURE THAT U.S. PARTICIPATION IS LIMITED TO EXTENT FEASIBLE TO OPEN SEA ACTIVITIES OFF ZAMBALES. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL, ALSO, TO ADVISE PARTICIPATING US NAVY ELEMENTS TO KEEP THEIR OWN PUBLICITY LOW KEY AND TO ENSURE THAT IT DETAIL SPECIFICALLY OUR ACTIONS TO LESSEN POSSIBLE CONFUSION WITH OTHER EXERCISES SUCH AS INFILTRATION EXERCISE OFF ZAMBALES. OUR SEATO PUBLICITY REPS PRESUMABLY CAN WORK TO SAME PURPOSE WITHIN

SEATO CENTRAL INFORMATION OFFICE.
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